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VICE News

A TikToker Smelled This 'Devil's Breath' Flower and Accidentally Drugged Herself

She had unknowingly inhaled Scopolamine, a powerful hallucinogen and potentially deadly narcotic

TD By Trone Dowd

June 29, 2021, 1:00pm Share Tweet Snap

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When singer-songwriter Raffaela Weyman found a large, yellow flower as she and her best friend walked to another friend's house, the two couldn't help but stop and smell it—repeatedly.

But Weyman, who lives in Toronto, later found out they'd inhaled what's widely considered to be one of the world's scariest drugs.

"When we arrived at our friend's birthday, we both suddenly felt so f*cked up and had to leave," reads Weyman's TikTok, which has received more than 24,000 likes and almost 500 shares as of Tuesday afternoon.

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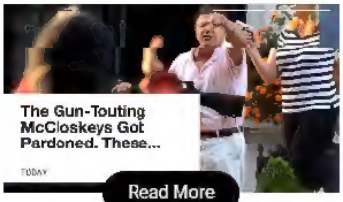

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The next day, Weyman and her friend learned that the flower, known as an Angel's Trumpet, is a source of scopolamine, a hallucinogen and potentially deadly narcotic, better known as burundanga or its street name "Devil's Breath."

"Turns out the flower is super poisonous and we accidentally drugged ourselves like idiots," her TikTok reads.

Devil's Breath is typically extracted from the bell-shaped, bright-colored flower as a powder or liquid and can be either added to drinks or inhaled. In 2012, VICE News compared the drug to "the worst roofie you could ever imagine, times a million."

Angel's Trumpet isn't all bad, however. Some of the plant's extracts can be used to make treatments for asthma and motion sickness, according to the Los Angeles Times.

"The deal with burundanga is that it pretty much eliminates your free will so you're awake and you're articulate," VICE News reported at the time. "To anyone else watching you, it seems like you're perfectly fine, but you've completely lost control of your own actions, so you're at the whim of suggestions, and that's how people take advantage of you."

During the Cold War, both the U.S. and the Soviet Union allegedly used the Devil's Breath for its hypnotic properties as a form of truth serum, according to the Telegraph. Now, the drug is commonly used to commit crimes like robbery and sexual assault—especially in South American countries like Ecuador and Colombia, according to the Guardian— as it makes its users more cooperative and easy to manipulate.

In 2015, three members of an international Triad-style criminal organization were arrested in Paris for using the drug to steal millions of euros from unsuspecting, mostly elderly people, according to the Telegraph.

In 2020, a Lyft driver in Atlanta told NBC affiliate 11 Alive that two men tried to abduct her using the drug. She was able to escape using her car's emergency button which alerts her Lyft dispatcher and local authorities.

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Inhaling Devil's Breath in larger doses can be dangerous and hospitalizes as many as 50,000 people a year in the drug's native country of Colombia, according to the U.S. Department of State.

"Scopolamine can render a victim unconscious for 24 hours or more. In large doses, it can cause respiratory failure and death," the State Department's report says.

Luckily for Weyman, her unknowing consumption of the drug only left her feeling unwell.

"When I got home and fell asleep, I had the craziest dreams and experienced sleep paralysis for the first time in my life," she said on TikTok.

"It's highly poisonous and causes hallucinations and zombie-like trances SOOOO stick to inhaling my music, not a random flower you find on the street," she told her followers on Instagram Sunday.

Devil's Breath can be grown in frost-free, typically coastal climates. And although the flower is highly poisonous, it's still legal to grow in most U.S. states.

TAGGED: SCOPOLAMINE, DEVILS BREATH, HALLUCINOGENIC, BURUNDANGA, TIKTOK, WORLDNEWS, WORLDDRUGS, ANGEL'S TRUMPET

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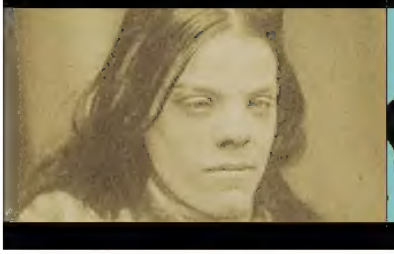

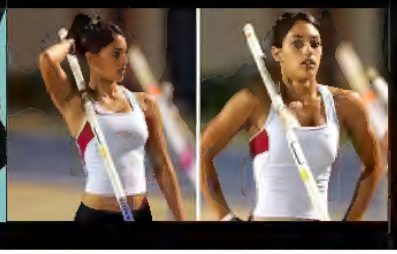

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"We believe a human error went to the miscalculation of the amount of material going into that vessel," the chief said.

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VICE News

Do Black Women Have to Save the Police, Too?

Embattled police departments around the country are hiring Black women as their police chiefs or commissioners in an effort to kickstart reforms.

By Trone Dowd

July 20, 2021, 7:54am Share Tweet Snap

FROM LEFT: CHIEF OF POLICE FOR THE COLUMBUS POLICE DEPARTMENT ELAINE BRYANT (DETROIT POLICE DEPARTMENT VIA AP); CHIEF OF POLICE FOR THE MEMPHIS POLICE DEPARTMENT CERELYN "C.J." DAVIS (JONATHAN ERNST/POOL VIA AP); COMMISSIONER FOR THE PHILADELPHIA POLICE DEPARTMENT DANIELLE OUTLAW (AP PHOTO/CRAIG MITCHELLDYER)

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When 48-year-old Elaine Bryant received the call from the mayor of Columbus, Ohio, on June 1 telling her she'd be the city's next police chief, she was elated. But she also recognized the immense challenges she'd face as a Black woman in a field dominated by white men.

On top of that, she'd have to lead a department responsible for the recent high-profile deaths of two unarmed Black Americans. When a Columbus police officer shot and killed Andre Hill in December, he was only holding a cell phone. Four months later, 16-year-old Ma'Khia Bryant died at the hands of police during a family altercation, the same day in April when Derek Chauvin was convicted of murdering George Floyd.

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Last year, Columbus, the state capital, ranked 14th nationally for the number of police-involved shootings, according to the Washington Post.